

# CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
September 29, 2008

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## ***Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy, the Municipal Council, State Legislators and Ceasefire NJ Continue Fight to Stem Proliferation of Illegal Handguns onto Jersey City Streets in Court and in Legislature***

JERSEY CITY – **Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy**, members of the **Municipal Council**, state **Assemblywoman Joan Quigley** and **Ceasefire NJ** held a press conference today to pledge their commitment to stem the proliferation of illegal handguns onto the streets of Jersey City and New Jersey.

The New Jersey Appellate Division issued a decision today upholding a lower court's ruling invalidating Jersey City's "One Handgun a Month" ordinance that would limit handgun purchases to one per month per individual. The Appellate Court held that the city's ordinance was pre-empted by state law regulating the permitting of handguns. The city continues to maintain, as it will in a petition to the New Jersey Supreme Court, that it has been delegated specific authority to "regulate and prohibit the sale and use of guns, pistols, firearms, and fireworks of all descriptions." [N.J.S.A 40:40-1(18)]

"Though we are disappointed that the Appellate Court did not agree with our position that Jersey City has the right to legislate in the interest of public safety, I am reaffirming my commitment to continue the fight to remove illegal handguns from the streets of Jersey City and the streets of all cities, suburbs and rural areas in the state," said **Mayor Healy**. "Multiple purchases of handguns have been labeled as inherently suspicious by the ATF and are one of the primary methods that illegal firearms get into the hands of criminals. Laws that limit the bulk purchases of handguns, such as our 'One Handgun a Month' ordinance, prevent straw purchasers from buying handguns in bulk that they later sell to criminals."

In June 2006, Mayor Healy introduced and the City Council passed an ordinance limiting the amount of handguns an individual could purchase to one per month. With NRA support and financial backing, a local gun dealer challenged the ordinance in Superior Court and the ordinance was struck down. The judge ruled that Jersey City was pre-empted by state law from enacting such an ordinance and that the ordinance unreasonably discriminated against Jersey City gun dealers.

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With assistance from Ceasefire NJ and Legal Community Against Violence, the city appealed that ruling arguing that it was a legitimate governmental interest to stem proliferation of handguns that could ultimately end up in the hands of criminals.

“We share the Mayor’s disappointment in the Appellate Court’s ruling and are somewhat baffled by it,” said **Bryan Miller, Executive Director of Ceasefire NJ**. “But, whatever its ruling, we will join with Mayor Healy and other mayors across the state to gain a statewide ‘One Handgun a Month’ bill (S-1174). I am confident that with the support of mayors, prosecutors and the citizens of our state that the senate will shortly take action on this critical measure to protect public safety.”

When the Superior Court initially struck down Jersey City’s ‘One Handgun a Month’ ordinance in 2007, Mayor Healy took the issue to Trenton where the bill managed to clear the Assembly in the last legislative session but was held up in the Senate. In the new legislative session, the bill has passed the Assembly and is awaiting a hearing in the Senate Law & Public Safety Committee.

“Today’s ruling emphasizes the grave need for New Jersey to take immediate action to limit people to buying just one handgun per month,” said **Assemblywoman Joan Quigley**. “We have been responsive to gun collectors, law enforcement and gun dealers to ensure that they are exempt from the proposed legislation. It is unthinkable that we should be responsive to individuals who without any justification want to purchase large quantities of handguns at one time. This not only threatens the fabric of communities across New Jersey, but threatens everyday neighborhoods who become victimized by acts of senseless gun violence.”

Mayor Healy is confident that with the leadership of bill’s Jersey City’s sponsors, State Sen. Sandra Cunningham and Assemblywoman Joan Quigley, the bill will clear the legislature and become a state law.

**All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.**

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